



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2009

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**SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS SUPPORTS
STRONGER CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR
ALL LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOSPITAL STAFF**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY – Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas on Tuesday declared his support of efforts to better screen the backgrounds of all Los Angeles County permanent and temporary health workers.

The Supervisor made his comments during an extensive conversation at the Board following a Los Angeles Times' report that Gariner Beasley – an LAPD officer fired after being convicted of rape while on duty – was hired by the County.

"I have long supported efforts to increase government accountability and to ensure the safety of vulnerable taxpayers who must rely upon government services," stated Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. In September 2007, for example, then Senator Ridley-Thomas introduced SB 868, which authorized criminal background checks of applicants for the registry of In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) providers and prohibited assessment of the costs of those background checks to consumers.

IHSS services are services provided to disabled residents so that they can live safely in their homes rather than in expensive institutions. "IHSS recipients are extremely vulnerable for abuse and the state has a special responsibility to ensure that they are being assisted by trustworthy caretakers," then Senator Ridley-Thomas wrote at the time in a letter to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

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The Board of Supervisors deliberated extensively regarding the available policy options for strengthening pre-employment screening and better ensuring patient safety. After a lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to establish standard protocol to be used by registries and temporary staffing agencies in performing criminal background checks.

The process will also include a system to evaluate practices by state agencies responsible for licensing health care professionals and better implementation of a local policy to require public safety officers to ensure employees at the facilities are wearing identification badges.

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